HOLY LIFE
DESCRIBED

And inforced on Professors of CHRISTIANITY,

IN A

SERMON

Preached at BISHOPS-CASTLE in the County of SALOP, *Jan.* 31. 167⅔.

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LONDON, Printed for *Hen. Brome,*

P267/492

Vol. 13 [illegible]

TO THE
READER.

READER,

AS it is not my design to endeavour the abuse of your candor or credulity, by being so absurd and uncivil as to strive to impose on you a perswasion that the ensuing Sermon comes into the World onely to gratifie them whose importunate requests would not admit of a denial; or onely to testifie my obedience to the forcible commands of them, whose Authority might exact as much as Honesty could grant; or to prevent some surreptitious and false Edition, (let those who have these or the like occasions to excuse and patronize their appearing in Print, make the best use of them they can) for as I have none of these to Apologize for me, so I will not be so morose and humoursome as to expose it to a publick view, without giving an hint of what did induce, or rather force me to this publication.

When the intreaties of some persons had extorted from me a promise to preach in the place, and at the time the

Title-page doth inform you, I did resolve to make use of the Sermon I had preached last amongst them, to whom I am more especially related in Dorsetshire. *And thus I thought I had no more to do, then to mention to those who should assemble there, what I had lately delivered to others in another place. But it seems the Sermon, or else some passages in the Sermon which take notice of the* Vices *of the* Times, *were so ill resented on one hand, or so misrepresented on the other hand, or both, that it was not long before I met with a severe check and reproof for my pains, before some company, in a publick place, and from* **A Worshipful Justice of the Peace.** *He was one who neither did live in the Parish, nor had heard the Sermon, but as it was related by one or two very inconsiderable and impertinent persons. I thought that person of quality had been so ingenuous that he would have been satisfied when he perceived I did disown the expressions with which I was charged, because I never used them, (though the expressions I think were warrantable enough) when I offered my Sermon to his perusal, and freely promised to acknowledge my mistake or error in the same Church, would he prove any expression unfit to be used in the Pulpit. This seemed to appease his fury for the present; a fair Copy he must have, which was in a short time prepared for him. Nothing was objected against it (as I could hear) till such time as it seems he was resolved to quarrel whether he had cause for it or not.*

After that I had some intentions to print the Sermon because the report was spread abroad that it could no

be maintained; I did resolve to forbear, till greater incivility did force me to let the World understand how unreasonably I was abused. One would think a Gentleman should scorn to be uncivil; but there are some that pretend to Gentility, who do strangely besmear themselves with very ungentile acts. If it were true that words are but wind, *yet every one that hath experienced the latter clause of the Proverb, can certifie that* blows prove unkind.

The Prophet Isaiah *informs us, that there were some who made a man an offender for a word, but now there is such a complexion, that a man shall be made an offender, and punished as such, for the words he never spake. Did Gentility and Justiceship direct to, and warrant such things, the ingenious (I suppose) would deem it a priviledge to be exempted from both. Those who are honest and sober could not but wish they might be delivered from the cruel paws of them who were thus obliged, I do not in the least question but that both the forementioned particulars do dictate more rational procedures. And I verily believe that he is unfit to be esteemed either Gentleman or Justice, or else he acts as neither, who measures his* Justice *by the* Will *of his* Mistress, *and takes an account of his Gentility by the costly Paint, and the Expensive Attire of his* Whore. *So unhappily are some worshipful Titles dispenced, that some men will claim them, who have little to deserve them, but the Picture of an Ancestor, and a little more then the name of an Estate, neither merited, nor purchased by themselves; or the notorious* Isa. 29. 21.

torious expence of some Orphans Portion *to amend the deformed face of a wanton* Minion.

Had I discoursed on some disputable and controversial Point, I could not have thought it strange to have met with some opposition; I might with reason have expected that some one or other would have been displeased with me, because I had not been of his persuasion. But when I onely treated on a subject which did tend to enforce the observance of those Rules, which direct us to live better then those who neither own a Saviour, nor think themselves obliged to lay any restraint on their vicious inclinations, I did not conjecture I should meet with any one professing Christianity, who would quarrel with a Clergyman because he spake against Vice *and would not applaud* Debauchery.

It has long since been observed that he who follows Truth *too near the heels, had need take care lest his teeth be dashed out. I am sure that now-a-days, he that speaks against* Vice *has reason to think he scapes very well, if some Hectoring and Majestick* Sir, *does not on a false information labour to box his ears for his pains, especially if he will not father every absurd and spurious sentence or word, such an ones or his Informers malice dare adventure to charge him with.*

Psal. 55. 21. *The Psalmist hath deciphered an untoward person, the* words of *whose* mouth were smoother then Butter, but war was in his heart; whose words were softer then Oyl, yet were they drawn swords. *Too many there are now who seem to be resolved that the pre-*

present Age shall not be exempted from the like Monsters.

In the Primitive Times none were to be acknowledged Christians, but those who lived suitably to the Profession they made. And Justin Martyr *informs us that the Heathens who persecuted and hated the Christians, could not render any reason why they did so. And now it seems some who profess they are Christians, will act like Heathens under that colour, towards those that will not own that Christianity allows men to be as bad as the Heathens were, or they can desire to be.* Ad Diog.

These are those Gentile Creatures *who admire none but persons of very mean and base extractions, Persons of no improvement, and as little reason: who intimate by their carriages and respects that they esteem none persons of worth, but such as at their best are onely accomplished to rub the heels of a Horse, who dare swear for a Glass of Wine that their Patrons are the greatest Saints on Earth, because their Devotions do all center at their* Miss. *These surely are they who think it below them to be honest, who conclude every one a* Clown *that will not drink the health of a* Drab, *and a ridiculous person who must make a pause before he proclaims to the World that he is a slave to one whose vileness may render her a Prodigie in Nature.*

Prophane and debauched persons cannot endure that their sins should be spoken against; whoever speaks but an ordinary truth, must be thought one that disrespects their persons. They are much of Ahabs *mind*, they hate 1 King. 22. 8.

hate them, for they do not speak good unto them, but evil. *None are fit to speak before these Worthies, but those who will sew a Pillow under their Arm-holes, and daub with untempered Morter. They are well acquainted with* Zedekiah's *carriage, he that speaks not to please them, shall be smote on the cheek by them. These men by their actions seem desirous to persuade us to believe the Transmigration of souls; and that as to their own parts, they are Tygers and Goats inspired with their Parents breath. These are they who carry their Reason in their Scabbards, and have their Arguments at their fingers ends: who have made a foot-ball of their Religion and Honesty, and given their Strumpets leave to spurn it into the Confines of Forgetfulness: who drink as though they were resolved to make their souls sops for the Devil: who live as though it were an Article of their Creed, to believe that there is greater happiness in the Embraces of a* Courtezan, *then in the enjoyment of God Almighty: who talk as though they thought it their greatest Rhetorick to rail at the Ministry. Their speech does please them best, when they tell their Companions, they hate the Cloth because the Clergy does wear it: who can laugh till their sides ake, when they or their Parasites strain to mention them with a term of disgrace. These are surely our Pert ones, who think they are Gentlemen, because they can look big, walk with state, wear a Dagger by their sides, drink profoundly, and love a Wench better then their Wives. From these and the like we may well pray,* Good Lord deliver us.

To the Reader.

I appeal to all the intelligent persons who heard me preach, whether the following Sermon be not a punctual account of what was spoken in the Pulpit.

I wish no worse to all who are disposed to quarrel at the Sermon, or with its Composer, then that they may know themselves, love, honour, and serve their Maker; let Reason have its due, value their souls aright, profess more, and live better.

And now Reader, no more is requested, but that you will read without prejudice and judge as you shall find cause, by him who is

Yours to serve you

SAM. BOLDE.

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1 Pet. 1. 15.

But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of Conversation.

WE may easily conjecture that matters of extraordinary importance, will oblige us to an inquiry after the most expedient methods, in order to our securing our own interests in them. And there being nothing that in reason should have an influence equally effectual on mans affections, with that salvation which the preceding part of this Chapter represents, both as noble for its Author, eminent for its Nature, and very worthy on the account of its transcendent and wonderful Discovery. Our Apostle thinks it is fit to prevent Enquiries, by an immediate discovery of what will infallibly lead to the fruition of it.

In the Text you have an account of that deportment which doth best become Christians, doth most suit with their Profession, and will most conduce to the salvation of their Souls.

There is first a Duty enjoyned. *Be ye holy.*

Then the extent of that Duty. *In all manner of conversation.*

And lastly, the Reason (as some conceive) to enforce the performance. *Because he which hath called you is holy.*

But (as I conjecture) the degree of holineſs we ſhould aim at, as much as may be, to reſemble the holineſs of him which hath called us.

It concerns the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity to demean themſelves ſuitably to that Profeſſion they make, or to what they be called. There ought to be a great difference betwixt the behaviours of men when they come to know and own the Doctrines of the Goſpel, and what they were whileſt they faſhioned themſelves according to thoſe luſts which domineer'd in their ignorance, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks in the 14. Verſe of this Chapter.

When I have diſcourſed of the Import of a perſons being holy, and have mentioned the obligations which do more eſpecially enforce a holy converſation on the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity, I will proceed to enquire into the Extent of the Duty; that being the ſecond particular the Text doth afford.

I will neither trouble you nor my ſelf with a particular enumeration of thoſe various and fond notions, which men of different perſwaſions have broached, when they have undertaken to certifie the World of the true meaning of a perſons being holy. Some of them either have framed very odd conceits, or elſe they have ſeemed to pleaſe themſelves with what they have judged a Sanctimonious phraſe in their diſcoveries. I leave theſe canting and wordy perſons to ruminate on their own language hoping that time will make them out of love with ſuch unintelligible Gibberiſh.

A perſons being holy (if I miſtake not) doth note his peculiar demeanour, which diſtinguiſheth him from men of looſer principles, and which explains to others his readineſs to ſtrive after a greater exactneſs in his conformity to Gods will. In the 20. of *Leviticus* and the 24. verſe we have God himſelf giving us the deſcription of a holy people by their ſeparation. *I am the Lord your God which have ſeparated you from other people, and ye ſhall be*

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holy unto me, for I the Lord am holy, and have ſevered you from other people that ye ſhould be mine. The learned *Mede* tells us, that Holineſs conſiſts in diſcretion, and diſtinction from other things by way of exaltation, and prehemi-nence.

Thoſe who can jollily take the liberty to be debauch-ed, do (indeed) difference themſelves from men of ano-ther ſtrain; but this diſtinction is not any mark of their holineſs, though holineſs do neceſſarily require a diſcri-mination. For that appropriatedneſs in a mans demea-nour which doth betoken his Piety, is ſuch as doth be-come remarkable on the account of its eminency or con-formity to rule.

For any one to be holy, is as much as to reſign himſelf to an endeavour, as much as may be, to reſemble Gods perfections. This cannot but expreſs it ſelf chiefly by laying a reſtraint on all the extravagant propenſities he ſhall diſcern in himſelf, by denying admittance to the ſug-geſtions of Satan, by not allowing any temptations to maſter him, and by diſpoſing and inciting him to Reli-gious duties, Spiritual exerciſes, Righteous dealings, and Temperate uſages.

I would not be miſtaken by any when I deſcribe a per-ſons holineſs by his demeanour, as though I meant that holineſs did conſiſt meerly in ſome outward acts, for it doth principally conſiſt in the frame of the heart, and the inward temper of the perſon.

To prevent that idle and eaſie excuſe men are apt to make for their miſcarriages, *viz.* that their hearts are as good as the beſt, though (it may be) their actions and lives are very little better then thoſe of the worſt. It may be requiſite to delineate holineſs in its peculiar, though outward dreſs. There cannot be a commenda-ble temper in the perſon, but it will expreſs it ſelf by thoſe worthy acts which be the genuine off-ſprings of ſo refined a ſpirit.

It

It will appear,

2. That Holineſs or a godly converſation is variouſly enforced on all who profeſs Chriſtianity, if you obſerve its agreement with the divine nature. The advantages which Chriſtians have above others in order to their being holy; the import of their Profeſſion; and the more remarkable deſtructiveneſs of impiety to ſuch pretenders.

1. Its agreement with the Divine Nature. No Argument was ſtrong enough to perſwade our firſt Parents in their innocency to offend, but that which came masked with a pretence to make them more eminent reſemblers of a Deity. If a devilliſh Impoſture did at firſt ruine us, when conveighed under a godly Vizard, what ſhould hinder but that the truth of what was then onely pretended, ſhould make us vigorous in the purſuit of our recovery by the ſame means? It would be the beſt uſe we could make of Satans treachery to worſt him and ſave our ſelves by the right management of his own weapon. Could we argue our ſelves into holineſs by reaſon of its tendency to promote Gods Image in our ſouls, we ſhould greatly improve our ſelves, we ſhould baffle Satan at his own Topick. When malice and envy had wracked the penetrating intellects of the fallen Spirits to make choice of the moſt plauſible motive, with which they might prevail with mans unerring nature to diſobey; this being pitched on, was deemed without doubt, the moſt probable to effect the deſign. Innocency not ſuſpecting the faireſt offers, might be entrapped moſt eaſily with a diſguiſe; but when falſhood does not lye in the bottom, only Truth appears in its own garb (one would think) it ſhould then be moſt attractive.

Thoſe diſcoveries which our ſhallow capacities do admit of a Deity, certifie that holineſs is moſt explicative of it. If the moſt rude and barbarous explain the apprehenſions they have of a God, their account will be, that he

he is holy. Thoſe who can own any thing at randome for their God, will notwithſtanding, aſcribe to him an incommunicable eminency, and a tranſcendent ſanctity. And men of all ſorts and perſwaſions can ſtrive to overvote one another with the moſt ſounding acknowledgments that God is holy.

That man muſt be more then ignorant, who has converſed with the Scripture, and will not own that God has placed his Image in holineſs; and that the only way by which we can attain to reſemble his perfections, is to be renewed in holineſs and righteouſneſs. Whether this do not oblige them who profeſs Chriſtianity to be holy, I will reſign to your free and ingenuous determination.

2. The advantages which Chriſtians have above others in order to their being holy. The increaſe of helps doth add much to the obligation to performance. He that lies under an equal obligation with others to any concern, may with reaſon conclude, that it is his duty as well as his intereſt to improve more propitious opportunities in order to his acquitting himſelf commendably in them.

There can be no diſpute about the certainty of mens being engaged in general, to abſtain from groſs enormities, yea from whatever is any way diſpleaſing to their God, and injurious to their ſouls, unleſs ſuch an one ſhould interpoſe, whoſe improvement in vice, were enough to make Impudence it ſelf bluſh.

Who, or where is the man who dares deny the obligation to be as univerſal as mankind, to withhold our hands from robbing our neighbours, ſlaying our friends, and murdering our parents? Who doubts of all mens being obliged to abſtain from Whoredom, Drunkenneſs, and ſuch miſcarriages? No man will ſcruple matters attended with ſuch notable evidence, unleſs it be one whoſe accuſtomary concernedneſs in Vice, has either benighted his underſtanding, or elſe perſwaded him to believe that

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his honour does require him to vindicate what he has done, though he would have condemned it in another for a misdemeanour, had not his own example made it authentick.

If all men in general are obliged to a careful and observant demeanour, without doubt the Professors of Christianity are much more obliged.

They have the advantage above others to know more distinctly what things are obliging, and what are not.

They have more perswading Arguments to enforce on themselves.

They have greater assurance of assistance and relief.

They have a more full and certain rule for the guidance of their lives by.

And they have their own voluntary obligations, the result of their profession, which bind them to a more worthy deportment then other persons.

3. The Import of their Profession. The very Profession of Christianity doth oblige men to renounce every sin, and to lead a holy life.

Whoever he be, that either calls himself, or allows others to term him a Christian, and strives not to abstain from every sin, and to behave himself in his several affairs and concerns, godly, righteously, and soberly, is as great an offender (I think) as he who makes it his business to poyson the Air he breaths in with the most open and horrid blasphemies, or with the most prodigious execrations, and makes no Religious pretences.

That you may not think me over-impudent in begging the Question, I will briefly give you an account of what the profession of Christianity doth mean, from whence you may with ease conclude, that that Profession doth indispensably oblige to a holy life.

The Profession of Christianity doth note the resignation of our selves to be commanded by Christ, and to be imitators of Christ. By having his name called on us

we certifie the World that we own his commands to be obliging. We profess we will subscribe to the Doctrine of the Gospel, and that we will answer the design of our Saviours life, sufferings, and death.

The great duty he enjoyns us, is to take care that both our souls and our bodies may be preserved pure, and unblameable; and that we cleanse our selves from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit, yea that we strive to perfect holiness in the fear of God. 2 Cor. 7. 1.

The Doctrine of the Gospel, take it which way you will, doth onely teach us this Lesson, *viz. To be holy in all manner of Conversation.* And whoever does subscribe to that, is concerned to be as good as his word, or else it will be time for him to quit the name of an honest man.

The encouragements which are laid down in the Gospel, aim at the more effectual incitement of us to the discharge of this duty. The dissuasives do all center at the very same point.

The Presidents and Examples of one kind or of another, do design the more eminent advancement of our practice, by an exemplary warning of us to eschew those miscarriages that our own propensities, or external allurements might hazard our sliding into; and by a happy directing us to detain our selves and our several exertions, within the Confines of morality and Christianity.

What you would have for a more clear discovery of this I know not, unless you would exact the Expostulations and the Sighs of a compassionate Saviour, when any persons do appear refractory. And whoever consults the Gospel, will find a plenary satisfaction as to this particular.

St. *Paul* in the second Chapter of his Epistle to *Titus*, and the 14. Verse, doth assure us that the design of our Saviours life, sufferings, and death, was to destroy our *corruptions, and to purifie us to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

If we acknowledge and own these things, we are concerned to walk circumspectly and to be careful that the tenor of our lives may bear a correspondency with the Import of our Profession. How can we be debauched under the Profession of the Christian Faith, but we must confirm that aspersion which intitled our Saviour a Wine-biber, or a Drunkard? Can we be proud or cruel, passionate or revengeful, and yet imagine that we believe the Gospel, and that we follow the spotless example of our Saviour? Christianity doth oblige us to the constant amendment of our lives according to the directions of the Gospel, and the faultless pattern of the Holy Jesus.

4. The more remarkable destructiveness of Impiety to such pretenders. Impiety can befriend no man, but it will be most displeasing in its consequences to them who pretend best. God will call the Heavens to attend, the Earth must hear when *Israel* will not know, when his people will not consider.

Isa. 1. 23.

When a difference in circumstances doth augment the sin, Justice cannot admit of an equality in the punishment. He who disobeys wilfully must have many stripes for his correction, when his offending partner miscarrying more ignorantly, shall suffer but a few.

Luke 12.46.

It is not a bare profession that makes men really good in Gods esteem: whilest men have so little of Christianity, as that they will adventure to maintain, and converse with their Minions, will be drunk for company, will oppress and grind the faces of the Poor, and commit the like offences. The profession of Christianity with which they would flatter themselves into a good and pleasant opinion concerning themselves, doth serve to no other purpose, then to post them more unconcernedly to their own destruction. He who obeys God sincerely, is the person who secures himself from that vengeance which will overtake the meer Professor with

with a witness. St. *Peter* tells us, *It were better for us not to have known the way of righteousness, then after we have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto us.* Impiety under a Religious Mask, doth seal ruine irrevocably to its Patron. 2 Pet. 2. 21.

2. We are now to consider the Extent of this Duty: *In all manner of conversation.* The Professors of Christianity should take a care that their several behaviours, and in their different capacities, be rendred comely, by a suitableness to that Profession they make.

The profession of Christianity does not only oblige us to abstain from the gross enormities of them who can perswade themselves to believe it is a priviledge to have their Bastards bend their knees and ask them blessing; or of those who waste their Time and their Estates by an unnecessary continuance in Taverns and Ale-houses who drink till their heads are so distempered, that they make the very stones in the streets become their Pillows; or of those who Emboss every sentence they speak, with a *God damn them*; or who think they can say but little to the purpose, unless they can frame each syllable (almost) to bid their Maker defiance. The profession of Christianity (I say) does not onely oblige us to abstain from these, and such prodigious offences; but also from many of those particulars which be generally accounted trifles, and very pardonable. The more we profess, the better we should be in all circumstances. I wish heartily that they would better digest this truth, who think themselves too good, and too holy to think well of our *English Conformity.* And that those who fancie it too defiling a business to speak a favourable word of our Government, Discipline, and Service, would learn to be more clear from Disobedience to the lawful and warrantable, Religious and commendable Præscripts and Institutions of their lawful and godly Superiours and Governours; from lying, back-biting, cheating,

Τί δ λέγεις ὅτι ἐν τοῖς φαινομένοις ἢ πορνεύω ἢ μαχέτης ἢ εἰμὶ φιλάργυρος, λοιπὸν δίκαιος εἰμὶ, πεπλάνηται ἐν τούτῳ, νομίσας ὅτι πάντα ἐξετέλεσας, ἃ εἰσὶ μόνον τέα μέρη, τὰ ἀυξήσας εἰς ἃ ὀφείλει τις ἀσφαλίσασθαι ἀλλὰ μυρία, ἢ τυφώσεις, ἢ ἀφροσύνα, ἢ ἀπίστα τὸ μῖσος. ὀφθόνος, ἢ δολιότης ἢ ὑποκρίσεις, &c. *Macar. Homil.* 3.

ing, and what are too generally accounted *Peccadilloes*, then those who be of the other perswasion.

Though singularity, when rightly applyed, is an aspersion that leaves a very foul stain behind it, yet a restrained and singular deportment properly considered, is so far from being any ones blemish, that it is his greatest glory and beauty.

Men may be ('tis true) and usually are scoffed at by a generation of Monsters, because their behaviours are different from theirs, and by that means more becoming Christianity. And the prophaneness of these late Times hath promoted impiety to such an height, that a holy conversation, and so Religion it self, are made the great, or rather the onely objects for wanton wits to try their Mettle on. Those who are stupid to admiration, when otherwise concerned, must be cried up, and applauded for the most ingenuous persons, and greatest wits, meerly because they can curse, swear, and damn; because they can talk obscenely, and act irregularly; because they can flirt at Religion, and jear at the regular demeanors of them, who have digested the principles of Christianity.

All this proceeds from the dissoluteness of mens lives, and their unwillingness to be restrained and tied up by the injunctions and rules of what they may term a severe holiness. We are not to regard the extravagant and harsh expressions of them who have byassed their Judgments by their Humours; but we should rather incite our selves from thence to a more diligent observance of what St. *Paul* saith, when he directs us, *Whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, do all to the glory of God.*

Though I might much enlarge my discourse by giving an account of what deportments according to the diversity of mens conditions, would most approve their piety to God, yet I will confine my self (to prevent tedious-

diouſneſs) and but briefly mention how we ought more eſpecially to demean our ſelves in theſe following inſtances.

1. In our Religious Exerciſes.
2. In our ordinary imployments.
3. In our common converſe.
4. Under the variety of providential adminiſtrations.
5. In the general courſe of our lives.

1. An holy awe and reverent reſpect to God and our ſouls, ſhould ever attend us in our religious affairs; our greateſt concernedneſs ſhould expreſs it ſelf principally on thoſe occaſions which do preſent us with the moſt convenient opportunities to teſtifie our due reſentment of Gods favours, and the true value we ſet on our own better part.

In the ſeveral particulars in which Religion doth branch forth its Exerciſes, we ought to manifeſt ſuch a poſture of Soul, as is correſpondent. For though holineſs be ever one and the ſame, yet it doth diverſifie its acts according to the alteration of the perſons condition or duty.

When we addreſs our ſelves to God by a Religious preſenting our Petitions to him, we ought to accompany our approach with the greateſt humility and ſelf abaſement, yet with the moſt importunate and earneſt reverence. In our entreaties for theſe inferiour matters with the trueſt ſubmiſſion and reſignation.

In our Praiſes we muſt principally expreſs our gratitude for ſpiritual bleſſings; and we muſt learn to aſcribe them, and all our other enjoyments, to the free goodneſs of him who gave them.

In hearing the Word, and attending on God in his other Ordinances, we muſt keep our hearts, thoughts, and affections, within the encloſures our Religion hath appointed them; we ſhould ſtrive ſuitably to anſwer the

the design of such Institutions. The sense of our wants should affect our hearts, the enjoyment of such means and advantages should exhilerate our spirits. Our desires should be much enlarged after the receit of what was intended in the appointment, and what is promised to the right performance. We should treasure up truths in our breasts, and we should intimate the genuine entertainment we give them, by the conformity of our lives to them.

2. We should behave our selves in our ordinary imployments with a freedom from over-troublesome and disquieting thoughts and cares. We must strive to manage our concerns with prudence and discretion. We must keep these in a due subordination to more noble objects. We must strive to abstain from those miscarriages, which too commonly attend persons so imployed. And we must learn to make them conduct us to matters of a sublimer nature.

3. In our common converse. Christianity doth not deprive us of our sociableness, but whilest we are in the World, we must converse with those who have an abode in it as well as we, but let us converse with what sorts we will, we must not forget our Christianity.

In our converse with those who are good, we must mutually endeavour the promotion of grace both in our selves and them. Our words and actions should aim at the glory of God, the honour of our Religion, and the encouragement of one another to labour for an increase in our Piety.

In our converse with them who are mastered by worse qualities, we must testifie a dislike of their miscarriages by forbearing to imitate them in their mistakes, by a seasonable and rational discovery of the obliquity of their actions, according to our capacities and places. We should strive to divert from what is unbeseeming, by a fit proposal of something more convenient.

4. Un-

4. Under the variety of providential administrations. Gods disposing of us into different capacities, doth call us to a more particular composure of our selves, most agreeable to such a condition. When we are enriched with blessings we must be sober, temperate, and meek, merciful, compassionate, and tender-hearted towards those who are otherwise exercised. When we lie under troubles and calamities, we must beware of murmuring and distrust. We should at such times strive to behave our selves with so much Evenness, that others may have occasion from thence to observe much of a sanctified frame in us. We should be patient, submissive, and contented. We should learn to exercise more grace, and more eminently.

5. In the general course of our lives we should act inoffensively towards all men: so as not to give them any just occasion to be displeased with us. All the passages of our lives should intimate an unwillingness to exasperate or provoke any men, unless our forbearance to sin be that which will incense them. We should be cautious of injuring others in their Names, Estates, or any other ways. We should strive to be generally good. We must learn to set a right estimate on godliness, so as to account it our Great, rather Onely gain. We must use Creatures with Moderation, and beware more especially of being ensnared by the over-plentiful use of those things which are good, commendable, and profitable, when used with a due observance of those limits which are constituted by Necessity, Religion, or a lawful Recreation.

I shall now labour to perswade you who profess Christianity to observe the Apostles advice, *viz. To be holy in all manner of conversation*; and by urging these following considerations.

1. How unbeseeming it is for any men to live unanswerably to that Profession they bare the World in hand with.

with. Mens mistakes and miscarriages are most notorious when they dissent from what they principally pretend. Should any one who pretends to Limning annex very considerable blemishes to his several Draughts, he might with reason be deemed much more fit to adhere to some other pretension. Such an one might (indeed) be accomplished to flourish at random with good Pencils, but 'tis pity he should be reckoned amongst them who are their Crafts-masters.

When we profess to delineate Christ, and to give (as it were) a visible draught of the Gospel by our lives, is it not very unhandsome that our actions should onely represent the deformities of Satan, or that our demeanours should manifest nothing, or at most, what is but little better then the obliquities of Hell? Our outward behaviours should be so ordered that men may have good reason from thence to conclude well of our more secret principles.

Whilest we pretend to be instructed by the worthiest Master, and to be Proselytes to the most holy Institutions, so long as we profess to imitate the best Presidents and certifie the World that we have the most satisfactory encouragements to the practice of our duties, as well as the most forcible Arguments to confirm our belief, we are concerned to live in a more exemplary and innocent manner then they who pretend no such things. Why do you not inform the World that you are Heathens, or Atheists, rather then Christians, if you resolve that your practices and lives shall be no better then theirs?

That man is as ill shaped as may be, to pretend Allegiance to an earthly Soveraign, who by his frequent Conspiracies, and his manifold acts of Rebellion doth manifest a disrespect to his Person, and a contempt of his authority, whoever he be that is intemperate, or unclean, covetous or malitious, proud or revengeful under the Profession of the Christian Faith, is as really disrespectiv

to his Creator, as he is to his Soveraign, who merits the ſevereſt penalties due to a Rebel.

It is a diſparagement beyond parallel to a Profeſſor of Chriſtianity, to have it truly ſaid of him that he makes no conſcience of his dealings; that he is maſtered by his luſts, that he is guided and governed by his paſſions; and that he makes no more uſe of his Religion then meerly to ſerve his ſelfiſh deſigns by it.

2. What an affront you offer Chriſt, what contempt you ſhew to the Goſpel, and what occaſion you give the Enemies of the Goſpel to perſiſt in their enmity to it, and to open their mouths in deriſion of it, if you be not holy in all manner of converſation? Chriſt hath ſuffered moſt from his counterfeited friends, and Religion hath received the deepeſt wounds from the bad lives of its Profeſſors.

The miſdemeanours of them who have born the Chriſtian name, have writ Impoſtor on the Saviour of the World; and as long as you profeſs Chriſtianity without endeavouring to be holy in all manner of converſation, you do no leſs then approve that Inſcription, by ſubſcribing your own names to it.

Whoever he be who believes the Doctrines of the Goſpel as he ought, can never act with an equal diſagreement to them, with thoſe who neither aſſent to the Exiſtence of a Deity, nor the truth of a future Eſtate. For the ſound and rational belief of thoſe things, would engage the affections and all the powers of the ſoul, both by virtue of the intrinſick lovelineſs of the Objects of our Faith, and the tranſcendent worth and merits of the Inſtitutor of our Creed.

Malice it ſelf, were it ſtretched to the height, could not find out a more untoward way to affront our Saviour, then to profeſs his Faith, and then ſpit in his Face; to own his Goſpel in our words, and then to term it a Ro-

mantick Story by our lives. It were much better (I think) for men to ſpeak out, and tell the World plainly, that they judge him a Cheat, and all his Doctrines the idle Fanſies of an addle brain, then by their words to own him for their King, and preſently to recreate themſelves in rebelling againſt him.

How greatly may we be amazed to hear men make a very commendable Confeſſion of their Faith in Church, and preſently ſee them live at ſuch a rate, as to invite the very Turks and Heathens to dart forth their invectives againſt our Religion, becauſe of their prophaneneſs? In what manner ought we to reſent the Infidels telling the World that they would become Chriſtians, would thoſe who profeſs Chriſtianity live better then they do?

Tryphо objects againſt the Chriſtians on this manner, Ἐκεῖνο δὲ ἀπορῆμεν μᾶλλον εἰ ὑμεῖς, ἐὰν τοῖς λέγοντες καὶ τῆς ἄλλων αἱρέσεως διαφέρειν, καὶ ὅσῳ αὐτῆς ἀπολείπεσθε ὑπὸ τῆς ἔθνων ὑμᾶς τρεῖν βίον. Juſt. Mart. Dial. cum Tryph.

3. How great the danger is which you incur, if you do not meaſure your lives by your Profeſſion? Others may be damned at a cheaper or eaſier rate, then thoſe who will ſwim to Hell and deſtruction in nothing but the bloud of Jeſus.

If there can be an addition to ſorrow and miſery amongſt the tormented, ſurely he muſt have it for his ſhare, who has lived a wicked life, under manifold obligations to the contrary, and his own acknowledgments of them. To act againſt forcible ingagements, and in oppoſition to acknowledgments, doth as well expoſe to a more ſevere puniſhment, as it doth render inexcuſable for the fact.

The profeſſed Enemies of the Goſpel may eſcape more eaſily then thoſe who have made it their buſineſs to ſtab the common Saviour under a pretence of reſpect; for treachery doth always augment the crime.

It were better you had been amongſt them who were puniſhed in *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, or that you had belched forth, *Crucifie him*, *Crucifie him*, amongſt the Jews, who did

did it ignorantly, or that for the present you were Heathens and Infidels, then to be Christians in name and no more: Because the aggravating circumstances which now increase the offence, could not have concurred to heighten the guilt; and consequently Justice would take care that the sentence should abate the extream rigour of the punishment.

4. How ready those who are prophane and debauched be, to be unholy in all their converses, and this without any obligation at all? The propensity of a different sort to different actions and behaviours, should be a strong perswasive to them who have the advantage on their side. Should you discern any one so inconsiderate, as to throw away his Estate with pleasure and speed, and by that means ruine himself, could yon not with ease argue your selves into such an humour as might dispose you to seek after the improvement of your own fortunes with a more notable pleasantness? And whence is it that when you observe others taking much pains to get their final confusion ratified, you do not perswade your selves to be more concerned to gain a greater certainty of your own safety.

Can others prevail with their mouths to belch forth Oaths and Curses, can they even fall on their knees and wish they may be damned, that Satan may take them, and that Hell may swallow them up before their time? Can they lie and cheat, murder and commit adultery? Can they slander and defame? Can they work all sorts of wickedness with greediness, and accomplish diligent searches for to find out sin? and have no obligation or incouragement to these things, unless it be the pleasure of being denied happiness, and excluded Heaven, unless it be the Recreation they shall take in reflecting on the toil they have put themselves to, to gain the very next residences to the Prince of Devils? and cannot you per-

ſwade your ſelves to be active according to thoſe rules which will direct you to a much better iſſue? *viz.* to reſemble your God.

3. The Text does certifie us in the laſt place, at what degree of holineſs we ought to aim. *As he which hath called us is holy.*

The Apoſtle doth not mean that we ſhould dream of an abſolute, eſſential, independent, and infinite holineſs; but that we ſhould conſtantly aim at higher attainments in a derivative holineſs, and that we ſhould be thriving in our ſpiritual eſtate. We are called on to add one grace to another, till we be made perfect. And St. *Paul* perſwades the *Corinthians* to perfect holineſs in the fear of God. We muſt not take up our reſt at ſome lower degrees, for (to uſe the Apoſtles words) *we are not perfect men in Chriſt*, at our firſt ſmaterings in Religion.

If holineſs be worth our pains and endeavours at all, then the more holineſs is without doubt more worthy. For additional degrees of what is valuable or deſirable, do merit an increaſe of our induſtry.

A proficiency in Holineſs does bring us more nigh to our primitive happineſs.

This makes us more to reſemble the Divine Purity. This ſets our hearts and our ſouls at liberty from their Slavery to Sin, and their inthraldom to Satan.

This preſerves us from thoſe Relapſes and Declines in which otherwiſe we ſhould be enſnared.

And this becomes a convictive Argument, to aſſure us of, and an excellent help to confirm us in the certainty of our being Holy.

How vigorouſly ought we to apply our ſelves to the obſervance of what concerns us ſo much as this advice of the Apoſtle doth?

Muſt we preſently give up the ghoſt? muſt we ſud-

denly

denly have our last breath tossed to and again in the empty Air? or must we forth-with approach the Tribunal of God, that there might be a survey of our lives? Can we think we should find any cause to complain of our striving to be good?

Were we but to be exercised with some of Satans more rough assaults, could we fansie our selves injurious to our selves, because we had not given him those advantages against us which he sought?

When we reflect on our lives, can it be our trouble that we can spie but few flaws in our past conversation? May not the increase of our bliss perswade us to strive after an eminency in Holiness? If there be degrees of happiness in the presence of God, he is the likeliest person (I suppose) to be most glorious and happy hereafter, who is most holy here; and he cannot in reason be judged the least happy at present.

Let us therefore have our souls over-aw'd by the divine Majesty, and let us frequently renew in our selves the sense and belief of Gods purity and omniscience.

Let us study the life, and labour to have our hearts affected with the sufferings of Christ.

Let us keep our eye connstantly on the demeanour of him, who came to be an example for our lives, as well as a propitiation for our sins.

Let us converse much with our duties, and take heed of Cloystering up the Commands of our Religion.

Let us not approach too nigh the borders of Sin, nor be too free with our Christian liberty.

Let us be readier to amend faults in our selves, than to spie them in others.

Let us frequently and fervently implore Divine Assistance to help us to an improvement in grace.

And let it be one great business of our lives thoroughly

roughly to digest Divine Truths, and effectually to press our selves to the observance of them in our several capacities.

By thus doing we may attain to answer the Apostles design, we shall be *Holy in all manner of Conversation.*

Which God of his infinite mercy grant, for the merits of the Holy JESUS: To whom with the Father, *&c.*

FINIS.

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